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ABSTRACT

This report contained the description and development of a secondary teacher education program at the University of Arizona. The program was based on the concept of full time involvement of the undergraduate in the public school setting. The Professional Semester Program was located in public schools serving multicultural populations of chicanos, Indians, and blacks. The criteria in the selection of participants were bilingual ability and bicultural experience. The nine objectives of the program were presented, focusing on the cooperation of university faculty members, student teachers, public school personnel, and pupils. The development of the program at Cholla High School, Tucson, Arizona was explained, with stress on the concepts of team teaching and open schools. Budgetary considerations and subjective evaluation procedures were discussed. It was concluded that the Professional Semester Program produced students with attributes of experienced teachers. (BRB)

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PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER PROGRAM

Department of Secondary Education
College of Education
The University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

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A JOINT EDUCATIONAL VENTURE--THE PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER

Department of Secondary Education, College of Education
The University of Arizona
and
Tucson and Sunnyside Public Schools
Tucson, Arizona

Summary Statement

In an era in which the educational profession seems bent on dissipating its own strength by separating teachers from administrators and public school personnel from the professional educators in higher education, the College of Education at The University of Arizona has initiated a joint professional venture that provides promise for reversing this trend. This venture is the Professional Semester Program--a project unique in both organization and purpose.

The concept of the Professional Semester is based on the premise that teacher preparation is best accomplished through full-time involvement in the public school setting. This University of Arizona program provides a combination of six semester units of basic methods and evaluation coursework with ten semester units of student teaching experience.

The total program is located in public schools serving multicultural populations of chicanos, Indians, and blacks. A faculty member from the Department of Secondary Education is assigned to each participating school center on a full-time basis. The methods and evaluation coursework and the student teaching experience are jointly planned in the school setting by faculty members of the cooperating school, professors from the College of Education, and participating student teachers. College of Education professors participate in curriculum planning, aid in developing programs to improve instruction, and serve on various school-faculty committees.

Bilingual ability and bicultural experience are primary criteria in the selection of student teachers for the Professional Semester Program. This program,

now in its fourth full semester of operation, includes four high schools and three junior high schools which have been organized into three centers. At present approximately 90 student teachers are involved in the Professional Semester Program.

The enthusiastic responses of participating public school administrators and teachers, the faculty of the secondary education department, and participating student teachers attest to the success of this program. This success is indicated in part by the large number of graduates who have been accepted for teaching positions in Arizona public schools. For example, of last year's 58 graduates, 44 desired employment--all were placed. By 1973-74, seventy-five percent of the 500 secondary student teachers graduated each year from The University of Arizona will be prepared through the Professional Semester Program. By working together in the pre-service and in-service preparation of teachers, the members of the profession have unified their goal aspirations for maximizing the educational levels of the public schools.

DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Professional Semester Program provides a significant means of enhancing communication and cementing the professional relationships among the school districts and the College of Education of The University of Arizona. Through sharing mutual concerns, the planning for common goals became the focal point of the program.

The College of Education and the public schools have long sought cooperative means for improving the quality of teacher preparation in the Southwest. Seeking to enhance this unified professional commitment, the Department of Secondary Education and cooperating public schools have experimented widely in the development of student-teaching programs.

As teacher preparation became recognized as a matter of professional commitment, agreement was soon reached that pre-service education is not the exclusive responsibility of colleges of education. Nor does in-service education belong exclusively to the public schools. Through mutual effort the decision was reached that a cooperative program could improve both pre-service and in-service education.

It was further agreed that admission to the College of Education was the initial step in entering the profession of teaching. Implementation of this generalization was considered a joint responsibility. And so cooperating teachers, and representatives of the College of Education came together to plan and develop the Professional Semester Program.

Concomitantly, a concern was expressed that the University should increase its involvement in preparing teachers skilled in working with minority ethnic youngsters. The traditional program had been more oriented toward preparing teachers of white, middle-class children. Any new program, it was suggested, should be located in ethnically-mixed schools.

As a result of their cooperative planning, the concept of an extensive pre-service experience, using ethnically diverse public schools as the laboratory, was devised. The Professional Semester Program began in the spring of 1970 at Tucson's Cholla High School. At that time Cholla was in its first year of operation. Its student population represented chicano, black, Indian, as well as Anglo ethnic groups. It had been conceived as an open-space school with a team teaching organizational emphasis.

An explanation of the development of the program at Cholla is provided by its principal, Mr. Herbert Waesch:

> The establishment of the Professional Semester Program at Cholla has provided many educational opportunities for both the student teacher and the school which were not possible in previous programs. This more realistic approach provides full range experiences for the student teacher in an open classroom setting, helping the student teacher to fit into the total school program for a full semester as a member of a teaching team. In addition, at least an hour a day is set aside to permit the student teachers to meet with their professor as a class, where they can discuss programs, methods, and problems; receive information about the school; and meet with members of the regular staff and administration.
>
> In the beginning the regular staff was faced with developing a program that would provide most efficient use of the open areas. By scheduling two-hour interdisciplinary cores, flexibility was possible in group size, group arrangement, length-of-time mods, and media use. The teaching areas are double-classroom size and are scheduled with two teachers (usually English and Social Studies), plus a teacher aide.
>
> Much effort and study is being carried out by the regular staff to examine the role of the teacher as a team member and to develop media and mode that use the group process, involves as many students as possible in the educative process, and provides for individualized instruction. Planning sessions are an integral part of the school day because all members of the team must work together to develop interdisciplinary and interrelated objectives and to determine skills needing concentration of effort. Certificated personnel have the responsibility of directing the activities and developing the objectives required as based on their diagnosis of individual needs.
>
> The experiences provided over the past three years in developing the Professional Semester Program concurrently with the team-teaching program have contributed invaluable insight needed to reinforce both efforts. By assuming responsibility for the duties of a teacher aide and one or more student teachers, the cooperating teacher has had an opportunity to structure job descriptions for each person, leading to more efficient staff differentiation. The student teachers experience all levels of team responsibility,

serving first as an aide, then a tutor, a teacher assistant in small groups, and finally as a full-fledged team member and team leader. This full range responsibility provides the student teacher with invaluable training which will help him adapt to any teaching situation after graduation. The greater understanding acquired through experience in all the roles enables the student teacher to adapt easily to any one of these roles.

The program, built on the team-teaching concept, also permits the regular teacher to maintain identity with his students. One problem of the traditional student teaching program was the distinct possibility of many students identifying with too many student teachers during the school year and losing rapport with the regular teacher. To avoid this occurring too often, schools limited the number of student teachers. With the University of Arizona-Cholla High School program, no limits have been established; rather, in most cases teachers have requested more than one student teacher per team.

Another strong advantage has been the direct supervision, evaluation, and guidance available to the student teachers, the cooperating teachers, and the administration through the placement of a University of Arizona student teacher director at the high school campus nearly full-time. This program was originally organized by Dr. Paul Allen. Now the program is under the leadership of Dr. Larry Smith, who has his office adjacent to the principal's. Attention and follow-up are continuously carried out, and the principal and the student teacher director have many opportunities to discuss and evaluate progress. Cooperating teachers also find time to meet with Dr. Smith to discuss any problem that might arise. The cooperating teachers now have a much better understanding of their position and have been reinforced in the development of techniques in individualized instruction.

It is obvious that a professional semester at Cholla would have some distinct difference from a professional semester in a more traditional high school. The second center was developed at Sahuaro High School in the spring of 1971. A letter from Mr. Al Slawson, assistant principal for personnel, provides the best description of a public school administrator's feeling about the Professional Semester Program:

In the past, we felt a professional responsibility to voice our opinion and support this opinion with action concerning the older and more traditional student teaching program. We did not feel the traditional program provided university students with an optimum student teaching experience; therefore, in the past, we did not cooperate fully with the College of Education in the student teaching program. We are thankful that people like Dr. Richard Krebs and Dr. Paul Allen listened to our concerns and then allowed us the opportunity to work with the College of Education in its development of the Professional Semester Program.

We feel that the training of new teachers should be a cooperative effort between the local schools and the College of Education. This experience should

also be as nearby the realistic as we can provide. Through the efforts of Dr. Paul Allen we have been able to establish the kind of cooperative effort needed by our two institutions. Dr. Allen's impact as coordinator of the Professional Semester Program at Sahuaro upon our staff and educational program has been of immeasurable significance to date. Our staff considers him a member of our team. Through his daily interaction with our faculty he has been able to change the attitudes of some towards their own work in the classroom as well as how they feel about themselves and their perceptions of future educational trends. Certainly an equally important facet of the program is the opportunity it gives the college undergraduate to work in as nearly a realistic setting as possible. It is very gratifying and rewarding to observe these young people becoming involved with our educational program, our staff and students. Sharing with them their feelings about this experience is beneficial both to the college student and to our staff. It really boils down to a togetherness in this professional growing experience. We are very pleased and extremely satisfied that Sahuaro High School is a part of this program. We are looking forward with a great deal of excitement in commitment to our continued involvement.

The success of the program might best be related in terms of growth by numbers of centers and increasing numbers of participants. These figures are listed below:

Semester	Center	No. Each Center	Total
Spring, 1970	Cholla	15	15
Fall, 1970	Cholla-Pistor Jr. High	18	18
Spring, 1971	Cholla	22	
	Sahuaro	18	40
Fall, 1971	Cholla-Apollo	26	
	Sahuaro	26	52
Spring, 1972	Cholla	30	
	Sahuaro	30	
	Apollo	30	90

It is indicated that an additional center will be needed for the fall of 1972. Additionally, it is estimated that approximately 75% of all secondary student teachers at the University of Arizona will receive their training through this program in 1973-74.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER PROGRAM

The objectives of the Professional Semester are constantly being revised due to the fact that the program is expanding from an original single center in 1970 to its present three centers. The statements below are, however, indicative of the program as it now exists. It should be noted that these general objectives are concerned with professional interaction between the public schools and the secondary education department. These purposes, listed below without priority, are the heart of the Professional Semester Program.

1. University faculty members together with public school teachers and administrators participate in an on-going pre-service teacher preparation program.
2. Student teachers become more responsible for their career development program through their full-time envolvement in their initial teaching experiences.
3. The Professional Semester provides student teachers with unique, realistic, full-time, and comprehensive experiences.
4. The cooperating public school teacher is provided with opportunities to examine his own effectiveness in classroom work.
5. Students in cooperating schools are provided more guidance and assistance through the Professional Semester Program, which supplements the number of professionals they encounter in their curricular schedule.
6. Public schools are provided more direct access to professional services available through the College of Education.
7. Consideration of the bilingual aspects so important in teacher education in Arizona, is given high priority in the selection and placement of teacher-interns by the cooperating schools and the secondary education department.

8. Cooperative educational ventures between public school and university educators are facilitated through maximum continuing planning and program development inherent in the Professional Education Program.
9. Concentrated involvement in preparing to teach in multicultural instructional environments are developed through the extensive and intensive experiences possible in a Professional Semester.

BUDGET AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES OF THE PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER PROGRAM

Budgetary considerations for the program do not exceed those of the traditional teacher education program in the College of Education. Secondary education department faculty members are allowed 10¢/mile travel expenses. Participating students pay a $7.50 fee for materials used during methods classes.

Evaluation procedures include a pre- and post-assessment of the program by the triad of participants. On-going, informal discussions are held weekly at each school. These discussions focus on the program in general and lead to implementation of specific changes when and where they are adjudged necessary.

Changes implemented in 1971 as a result of pre- and post-semester assessment sessions are, for example, the following:

1. The number of classes per day assigned to student teachers was reduced from five or more to four.

2. The reduction in the number of classes assigned to student teachers facilitated their visitations and observations with other classes.

Other subjective evaluation procedures include periodic papers prepared by cooperating school faculty members and the beginning of a follow-up study of Professional Semester participants. It is important to note that the nine major purposes of the Professional Semester are examined closely during both formal and informal evaluation sessions by all involved members of this cooperative program.

In summary, it is evident that although strictly objective evaluation is impossible, subjective evaluation procedures have been extensive and intensive by involving many people in the process. It is also significant that many of the college students who enter the program do so because of the word-of-mouth advertising of earlier participants.

HOW THE PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER PROGRAM CONTRIBUTES

TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

It is the consensus of all program participants, both present and past, that the Professional Semester is a major improvement over traditional student teacher programs. Mr. Leo Croteau, Chairman of the English Department at Sahuaro High School has written:

> The Professional Semester gives the student teacher far greater opportunities to learn in the field--it makes him a full-time member of the English department, and not a here-again, gone-again apprentice.

It should be noted that high visibility has been one of the tangible benefits derived from the program by those secondary schools which have cooperated with the University. Mr. Al Slawson reported that the presence of the University representative on site "has been of immeasurable significance through daily interaction with our staff"

Similarly, student teachers feel they profit. Past participants in the program believe they have been offered the advantages of a true, complete teaching schedule while also being provided "on the job" opportunity for analysis of ability, teaching styles, and instructional methodology. They are also afforded multiple feedback sources for immediate correction of errors related to planning and classroom presentation.

Mr. Tod Prouty, a participant in the Professional Semester in the fall of 1970, and now an instructor in the social studies department at Sunnyside High School wrote:

> The Professional Semester does come as close as anything I have experienced to creating the ramifications of a total systems approach to educating the college student. It facilitates role recognition and quality skill acquisition in the area of operating ability. Increased awareness levels and employability are the primary benefits of this concept in education.

Mrs. Jane Johnson, a department chairman at Cholla High School, writes:

> With the myriad details to be attended to when teaching, the building of confidence of really knowing and handling what is expected, all day long, all week long, all semester long, is an aim of ours. With the cooperating teacher as a model, but also a person, the student teacher and supervisor from the University become part of a chain of educators, each contributing to the learning process. The cooperating teacher accepts the student teacher as a full-time professional from the first day he appears at Cholla. From that point on, the student teacher is not a student, but is a teacher. With that in mind, the program tries to develop and change the student teacher from an inexperienced teacher to an experienced one, ready to face the professional education world.

Feedback from present and former students is almost universally favorable to their student teaching experience, which is somewhat of a contrast to the students in traditional programs. Professional Semester students have increased employability, as well, in a time of reduced job opportunity. In one fall semester all participants seeking employment were hired mid-year in local school systems. Enhancement of employability of novice teachers is the responsibility of the profession as a unified whole. The joint venture of the Professional Semester produces a "product" which has the attributes of an experienced teacher.